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(U) During World War II the Germans enjoyed a number of cryptologic successes which they were able to turn into tactical advantages. Sometimes, however, they failed to exploit a strategic opportunity because the Nazi worldview interfered with reality.

(U) German efforts in Yugoslavia in 1943 presented a case in point.

(U) German military intelligence successfully broke the codes used by the Yugoslav partisans led by Josip Broz, who adopted the nom d'guerre "Tito" (and who would lead Yugoslavia after the war.) The information that resulted was given to the German army and used to good effect. The partisans suffered one setback after another; eventually, Tito became certain he had a traitor on his staff. Tito carried out a purge until someone pointed out that his weak codes might be to blame. His response to this suggestion was to order his units to change the radio frequencies they used, but not their codebooks. Of course, the German cryptologic attack was not even slowed down by such an inept move.

(U) But the Germans, because of their ideology, missed a golden opportunity. Their intelligence services also learned that Tito was not entirely satisfied with relations with either the Soviets or the Western allies, and was concerned about Yugoslav rivals. He went so far as to offer a ceasefire to the Germans, an offer rejected by Hitler's terse comment: "I don't parley with rebels -- I shoot them!"

(U) Rather than reach an agreement with the partisan leader, Hitler's obtuseness kept several German divisions tied down fighting Tito's forces, divisions that were sorely needed elsewhere.

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